

**HOMILY  
OF THE BISHOP OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND  
KYR IRINEJ  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF REPOSE OF SERBIAN  
PRINCE  
PAUL KARAGEORGEVITCH  
AND HIS WIFE, PRINCESS OLGA, AND SON, PRINCE NIKOLA**

September 14, 2006  
In Belgrade

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

YOUR HOLINESS,  
YOUR EMINENCE,  
YOUR GRACES,  
YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES,  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS  
HIGHLY ESTEEMED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,  
VERY REVEREND AND VERY VENERABLE FATHERS,  
RESPECTED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN –  
BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST THE SAVIOR:

We have gathered here today in this historic Cathedral of the Holy Archangel Michael on the thirty-year anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of a man of letters and literacy, a man of beauty and arts, a man of culture and a true Renaissance gentleman, our own Serbian Prince Paul Karageorgevich. Together with our Patriarch, Kyr Pavle, together with our bishops and priests and the faithful of our Holy Church, together with his family, together with all of you who love your people and honor the memory of Prince Paul, we have prayed to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is both The Life and Resurrection, for his noble soul and the souls of his wife, Princess Olga, and their son, Prince Nikola.

Prince Paul, the great-grandson of the great Serb Leader Karageorge, was in all respects an unusual phenomenon in our environment. Born to Prince Arsen Karageorgevich and Princess Aurora Pavlovna Demidov di San Donato in St. Petersburg in Imperial Russia, he was ten years old the first time he saw Belgrade, the same age at which he became a motherless orphan. He was raised by his uncle King Peter I "The Liberator".

He completed the classical secondary school in Belgrade and then in accordance with his own wishes, he traveled to England to study art history at Oxford. He was said to have been more than subjective idealists could imagine: the perfect, the ideal, the exemplary Belgrader dedicated to beauty. Beauty is the framework and inexorable destiny of the ideal Belgrader for this thread of ours is the living link we share with eternity. For beauty is the present, never yesterday, never tomorrow. And in the words of Isidora Sekulic: "The destiny of beauty . . . is an essential expression of being . . ." In search of lost beauty in the glossary of Serbdom, within its bouquet, lies the highest expression of beauty in the tragic.

World War I prevented him from finishing his studies on schedule. After the war, he returned to Oxford and successfully completed them, earning the degree of Master of

Arts. In London he met Princess Olga, daughter of Prince Nicholas of Greece and Grand Duchess Elena Vladimirovna Romanov. Princess Olga was said to be the fairest princess in Europe! They married in Belgrade in October 1923. She gave him the gift of three children: Prince Alexander, Prince Nikola and a daughter, Princess Elizabeth.

A great patron of the fine arts, especially of painting, from his early youth, Prince Paul immediately began work on founding his museum. At the beginning of 1929, just across the road from this Holy Shrine in the Residence of Princess Ljubica, the Museum of Contemporary Art opened its doors, the achievement of this great lover of art. He and his friends from Europe introduced the first institution of its kind in Serbia with many paintings by famous artists. In 1933 King Alexander I appointed him the director of all museums in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

And then, his cousin the knightly King Alexander I, met with his tragic death in Marseilles on October 9, 1934. And Prince Paul became the first Regent of the young heir to the throne, King Peter II. Assuming this responsible office, he swore an oath that he would protect the Kingdom until Peter reached maturity.

An enormous weight immediately settled on his shoulders: preserving the integrity of the state and reconciliation of all the antagonisms that surfaced with the creation of a new country. Internally, he had to contend with the divisive policies and dissatisfaction of the politicians, while abroad he was faced with the increasing weakness of his allies. Deeply aware of his responsibility, he invested every effort to achieve an almost impossible balance in foreign and domestic life. Nonetheless, he himself wrote at that time, "My only consolation is art and it serves to compensate many things for me."

By the beginning of 1935 he had opened the Museum that bore his name. The Museum instantly gained worldwide renown and is recognized even today – despite the fact that it was abolished in a brutal manner and currently does not exist – except as myth, as cherished memory, not only among Belgraders but among all sophisticated Europeans. With the Museum Prince Paul created his own memorial as did all the best Serbian rulers – the holy Nemanjic Dynasty – the builders of church-endowments, the masterpieces of Serbian civilization and culture. Today we have only to view his collection of paintings in the White Palace to understand the refinement of taste with which he was endowed.

And truly, as the head of the state into which Serbia had invested everything, in this most tumultuous period of modern European history he was a prince-benefactor of the *beaux arts*, a true nobleman whom Jovan Ducic compared with the famous Medici of Renaissance Florence.

During the unrest of the initial storms of World War II, on the basis of fact and logical thought, the Prince Regent realized that Yugoslavia must regulate its own relations with the threatening world powers and without anyone's help. Prince Paul was deeply aware that he himself was in great danger. However, he knew he was sacrificing himself for a greater cause. He was a superior individual. He recalled the suffering of our people during the course of World War I, and he wished to avoid at all cost a new Golgotha. He became increasingly convinced that there were no insurmountable considerations for the sake of the salvation of his country and the people, to avoid yet another unprecedented tragedy.

A devoted head of state, he chose peace for his people and thus became the first victim of the inescapable burden of the tragic age in which he lived. Upon his arrest, the Prince said to the military priest in attendance: "Poor Serbs, what shall become of them?" He was given four hours to prepare for departure. At midnight on that fateful day in 1941 Prince Paul left the capital with his family. He was handed over in Greece and conducted to Egypt. Then the entire family was deported to Kenya. They were forced into isolation, into the middle of a jungle on the shores of Lake Naivasha. Karageorge's great-grandson thus began his long period of exile.

After World War II he lived until September 14, 1976. On April 12, 1954, the Prince's younger son Nikola, in whom he placed his greatest hopes, lost his life in an automobile accident. Princess Olga passed away on October 16, 1997.

Sixty-five years have passed since his exile. "The fullness of time" has come to pass for the great exile to return to his Serbia, and for the mortal remains of Prince Paul, Princess Olga and Prince Nikola to return to their country and be buried in their family tomb; moreover, for his beloved museum to be re-opened that it may serve as an inspiration to us all, and lead us from beauty to truth. Amen! God grant that it be so!

**May the memory of Prince Paul Karageorgevich of blessed repose be eternal!**